

came when he served in the capacity of Director of Maintenance in the early 1980's. At this time he directed and supervised all renovations and construction to the Country Motor Lodge and adjoining restaurant.

In June of 1997, however, Albert Cournoyer's accomplishments, experience, consistent maintenance of the highest quality standards, and hospitable demeanor received their crowning recognition in an announcement which named him the newly appointed Innkeeper of the Publick House. Based on Mr. Cournoyer's record of excellence it came as no surprise that such a worthy candidate received the Innkeeper position.

The qualities that Albert Cournoyer has exhibited for 40 years and continues to reveal in his work at the Publick House are those that all citizens should strive to emulate. For the Publick House's frequent patrons, celebrants of special occasions, and travelers stopping off at this landmark, Albert Cournoyer, for 40 years, has been making their experiences both memorable and enjoyable. I am fortunate to serve such an outstanding citizen and I am proud and honored to congratulate him today.

THE MEDICARE CRITICAL NEED
GME PROTECTION ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 1998

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce "The Medicare Critical Need GME Protection Act of 1998." This important legislation seeks to protect our nation against the depletion of health care professionals that are trained to appropriately treat costly and deadly illnesses.

Under current law, the Medicare program provides reimbursement to hospitals for the direct costs of graduate medical education training. That reimbursement is designed to cover the direct training costs of residents in their initial residency training period. However, if a resident decides to proceed with further training in a specialty or subspecialty, a hospital's reimbursement is cut to half (50%) for that additional training.

The rationale for this policy is strong. In general, we have an oversupply of specialty physicians in our country and a real need to increase the number of primary care providers. By reducing the reimbursement for specialty training, the Medicare program has promoted increases in primary care training rather than specialty positions.

I agree with this policy. However, as is often the case, there are always exceptions to the rule. We do not want to hinder training of particular specialties or subspecialties if there is strong evidence that there is a serious shortage of those particular physicians. That is why I am introducing The Medicare Critical Need GME Protection Act.

To provide an example of a current subspecialty facing serious shortages of professionals, we can look at nephrology. Between 1986-1995, the number of patients with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) has more than doubled. At present, more than 40 million Americans die from kidney failure or its complications each year. In 1998, the estimated cost to treat ESRD will exceed \$12 billion.

However, current data indicates that only 51.8% of today's nephrologists will still be in practice in the year 2010.

Most primary care physicians are not trained to treat the complex multi-symptom medical problems typically seen in ESRD and are unfamiliar with particular medications and technology prescribed for such patients. The decreasing supply of nephrologists, coupled with an expanding population of renal patients, puts the health of our nation at risk.

The Medicare Critical Need GME Protection Act provides a tool to help combat such shortages of qualified professionals. The bill would simply provide the Secretary of Health and Human Services with the flexibility to continue full-funding for a specialty or subspecialty training program if there is evidence that the program has a current shortage, or faces an imminent shortage, of physicians to meet the needs of our health care system. The Secretary would grant this exception only for a limited number of years. The Secretary would have complete control of the exception process. Programs would present evidence of the shortage and she could agree or disagree with the analysis. Nothing in this bill would require the Secretary to take any action whatsoever.

The bill also includes protections for budget neutrality. If the Secretary approves a specialty or subspecialty training program for full-funding under this bill, the Secretary must adjust direct GME payments to ensure that no additional funds are spent.

Again, The Medicare Critical Need GME Protection Act does nothing more than provide limited flexibility to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to ensure that we are training the health care professionals that meet our nation's needs.

I would encourage my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation. By giving the Secretary the flexibility to allocate funds to attract and train professionals in certain "at risk" fields of medicine, we will significantly improve patient care and lower long term health care costs.

A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 1998

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the selection of Warren P. Shepherd Junior High School as a Blue Ribbon School.

Located in Ottawa, Illinois, Shepherd is one of only 166 secondary schools in the nation presented with this prestigious award by the United States Department of Education. The Blue Ribbon Award is sought after by thousands of schools across the country.

Blue Ribbon status is bestowed upon schools with qualities including strong leadership, a clear vision and sense of mission, high quality teaching, challenging and up-to-date curriculum, and solid evidence of family involvement. These are the schools that best prepare children for the challenges they will face in the future. Blue Ribbon schools are also effective in meeting local state and national goals.

Led by Principal Michael Bannister, Shepherd Junior High School clearly has the characteristics of a Blue Ribbon school. As a sev-

enth and eighth grade junior high school, Shepherd strives to maintain excellence, effectiveness and equity in the education of young people in the "middle grades." This school of 513 students serves both regular and special education students. Shepherd was recognized for its ability to combine these two populations through a successful peer partnering program.

As with other Blue Ribbon schools, Shepherd prepares our young people for tomorrow's challenges through active learning programs. Shepherd's hands-on learning philosophy is perhaps best evidenced by its science curriculum. After undergoing several major technology-related renovations last year, Shepherd has become a technology leader in north central Illinois. At least one new computer with multimedia capabilities and Internet access has been installed in each classroom. In addition, clusters of up to six new computers were placed in four locations of the building, and a Special Education computer lab was installed.

Among Shepherd's strong points are an integrated curriculum designed by cross-curricular grade level teams, a commitment to the development of skills in the area of language arts and exemplary students, faculty and administrators. These and many other accomplishments led qualified Shepherd for Blue Ribbon status.

Mr. Speaker, today I recognize and honor Shepherd Junior High School as a recipient of the prestigious Blue Ribbon Schools Award. Shepherd exemplifies the standard of excellence to which all junior high schools should be held. I am proud to represent a district that includes schools of Blue-Ribbon caliber.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JOHN
KELLY

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 1998

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the career of one of the longest serving National Officers of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), AFL-CIO, John Kelly, who has announced his retirement after a most distinguished career representing Union members.

John Kelly was a native of the Philadelphia, PA area, but came to the Denver area when he was four years old. He was a graduate of North High School and began his career with the United States Post Office on September 30, 1962, eight years before Congress created the U.S. Postal Service.

John's sterling union career began as a steward, later as secretary, and finally, as President of the Denver local. In 1971, five postal unions merged to form the APWU, and John became a full-time union officer. As the National Vice President for APWU, John served on the National Executive Board, the highest governing body of the Union. Today, he is the senior business agent for the APWU, an organization which has grown to include business agents nationwide.

During his tenure with APWU, John was well-known not only for his skills at arbitration but for his ability to help the members understand the very technical language of their contract with the Postal Service. His expertise